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Hurricane Response:

1 — Mayor, council clash over Harvey debris removal questions, Houston Chronicle, 9/20/17

<http://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/politics/houston/article/Mayor-council-clash-over-Harvey-debris-removal-12216212.php>

City Council members under pressure from constituents to remove the thousands of piles of Hurricane Harvey wreckage on Houston curbs spent Wednesday morning shouting over each other about the topic before delaying a proposal Mayor Sylvester Turner said is needed to meet the city's goal of trucking 150,000 cubic yards of that debris to landfills each day.

2 — Cleanup crews have removed '8 football fields' worth of debris after Harvey, Houston Chronicle, 9/20/17

<http://www.chron.com/news/houston-weather/hurricanes/article/State-cleanup-crews-removed-8-football-fields-12215582.php>

State workers are busy removing signs of Harvey's devastation across Texas.

So far, 432,000 cubic feet or eight football fields worth of debris have been cleared from Texas roadways, according to Gov. Greg Abbott.

3 — Valero's Port Arthur fire released an estimated 1 million pounds of emissions, Houston Chronicle, 9/20/17

<http://www.chron.com/business/energy/article/Valero-s-Port-Arthur-fire-released-an-estimated-1-12215325.php>

Valero Energy's refinery fire on Tuesday released nearly 1 million pounds of emissions into the air, mostly from the columns of smoke caused by the burning oil, the San Antonio company estimated.

4 — What lurks in the sludge that Harvey left behind?, Houston Chronicle, 9/20/17

<http://www.houstonchronicle.com/local/gray-matters/article/What-s-in-the-sludge-that-Harvey-has-left-behind-12198432.php>

All over the Houston area, as Harvey's floodwaters receded, they left behind sludge – a mix of grit and debris picked up from streets and sewers and eroded bayou banks.

5 — Kept waiting, Kashmere Gardens is helping itself after Harvey, Houston Chronicle, 9/20/17

<http://www.houstonchronicle.com/local/gray-matters/article/Kept-waiting-Kashmere-Garden-helps-itself-after-12215726.php>

Kashmere Gardens is a historically African-American community with a growing Hispanic population and one of the poorest in Houston. Kashmere Gardens lies just beside Hunting Bayou and was one of the first areas to flood during Hurricane Harvey. It has been in a terrible waiting game ever since.



Mayor, council clash over Harvey debris removal questions

By **Mike Morris** | September 20, 2017 | Updated: September 20, 2017 6:51pm

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Photo: Michael Ciaglo, Houston Chronicle

IMAGE 1 OF 3

A man moves debris from his flooded home into Homewood Lane near Tidwell Road where trash removal is beginning Wednesday, Sept. 6, 2017 in Houston.

City Council members under pressure from constituents to remove the thousands of piles of Hurricane Harvey wreckage on Houston curbs spent Wednesday morning shouting over each other about the topic before delaying a proposal Mayor Sylvester Turner said is needed to meet the city's goal of trucking 150,000 cubic yards of that debris to landfills each day.

Houston had removed a total of 400,000 cubic yards of debris by Tuesday night, the mayor said, noting the ongoing struggle to draw enough trucks into service. The difficulty is partly because the region is competing with a similar cleanup in Florida and partly because the debris removal rate the city had received through competitive bidding before Harvey proved too low to attract subcontractors.

Turner said he has received approval from the Federal Emergency Management Agency to be reimbursed for 90 percent of the city's debris removal costs not only at the competitively bid rate, but also at a newly negotiated rate that is 50 percent higher.

That higher rate will entice more subcontractors onto Houston streets, he said, but also will require the city to contribute more to what now is expected to be a \$260 million effort.

To that end, council considered allocating an additional \$60 million to its main debris removal contract. That the item was delayed one week - over Turner's strenuous objections – likely will not have a noticeable effect on the cleanup, but it reflected council members' unrest over a lack of communication about the debris removal effort that had left them flat-footed in answering constituents' questions.

"There's a lot of debris everywhere. I know people want it up right now," Turner said. Still, he said the process may be slower than desired because some truckers have sought even higher rates. "I'm not going to be aggressive in going beyond the FEMA-

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approved rate. I'm not going to assume an added amount more beyond that when we don't know where those dollars are going to come from."



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Buffalo Bayou buried in unprecedented layers of silt



Hauling off Harvey debris will take time

Against a backdrop of intense constituent interest, the discussion quickly went sideways.

Turner already was miffed at questions from Councilmen Jerry Davis and Michael Kubosh about what value prime contractor DRC was providing for its fee when Councilman Larry Green chimed in, seeking information about minority contracting and when trucks were slated to visit neighborhoods in his southwest Houston district.

When Turner declined to answer his queries, Green responded by tagging the item, forcing a one-week delay.

The mayor accused Green of slowing the debris removal process and even suggested the other council members were acting irresponsibly by not voting to override Green's tag - one of the few powers granted to council members in Houston's strong-mayor system.

"No one is in a position right now to provide that specificity. There's debris all over the city in large amounts," Turner said. "Everybody wants it out of their districts. I got that. But it's citywide, not just district-specific."

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Green defended his decision and questioned whether a week's delay would change anything when the current contract is not at risk of expiring or running out of funds. He added that Councilman Dave Martin had been sent crews from the city of San Antonio to clean up Kingwood and that Martin had been receiving detailed information about the debris removed and the next areas to be visited.

Martin retorted that he had better information because he had worked for it, angering his colleagues.

"Maybe that's some Kingwood stuff that's happening," Green said, "but it's not happening in (District) K."

Turner was furious, and appeared to question Green's motives.

"That statement is blatantly false," he said. "If you're after something else in terms of subcontracts, say it."

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Other council members kept their tempers in check, but joined Green in asking for clearer information.

"Just give us a plan: Where you intend to be and when you intend to be there," Councilman Mike Laster said.

The key focus right now, the mayor said at his post-meeting news conference, is adding trucks to the roads to remove an "unprecedented" amount of debris, then to improve communications.

"I've spoken to a number of these contractors and subs, and when I'm talking to the subs the thing they keep asking me (is), 'Mayor are you going to pay us? Are there going to be any delays?' I'm telling them, 'We are going to pay you,'" Turner said after the meeting. "What happened today doesn't strengthen my hand. It sends the wrong signal."



Mike Morris

City Hall Reporter,
Houston Chronicle

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Chron <http://www.chron.com/news/houston-weather/hurricanes/article/State-cleanup-crews-removed-8-football-fields-12215582.php>

Cleanup crews have removed '8 football fields' worth of debris after Harvey

By **Fernando Ramirez**, Chron.com / Houston Chronicle Updated 4:18 pm, Wednesday, September 20, 2017

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IMAGE 1 OF 18

Houston after Harvey

On Wednesday, Gov. Greg Abbott praised state workers for removing eight football fields worth of debris brought on by Harvey.

See a by the numbers look at how Harvey impacted Texas.

State workers are busy removing signs of Harvey's devastation across Texas.

So far, 432,000 cubic feet or eight football fields worth of debris have been cleared from Texas roadways, according to **Gov. Greg Abbott**.

That's almost enough to fill up five Olympic-sized swimming pools with debris.

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"Removing debris from the areas affected by Hurricane Harvey continues to be a top priority for the state," said Governor Abbott in a prepared statement. "TxDOT's efforts are having a meaningful impact and are helping Texans get back to normalcy as quickly as possible."



"I am grateful for all the state employees who are working to assist in the recovery efforts, and I will continue to make all state resources available to aid in the ongoing recovery efforts across the Gulf Coast," he said.

Despite the progress it's clear from driving around Bayou City that a lot of work still remains.

A week after Harvey, **The New York Times** calculated that Houston had nearly 100,000 piles of destroyed junk lining the city's streets, waiting to be cleared.

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RECOUNT: Hurricane Harvey's rainfall record may be higher than officials thought

If the destruction caused by Hurricane Ike in 2008 is any indication, eight football fields of debris will balloon to an even greater figure in the coming months.

An estimated 270 million cubic feet of debris were cleared in Harris County alone following Ike, according to the **Harris County Flood Control District**. That's roughly 6.5 times as big as the Houston Astrodome.

Similarly, FEMA estimated 675 million cubic feet of debris were cleared across all of Texas after Ike, enough to fill NRG stadium 7.5 times, according to the Harris County Flood Control District.

See a by the numbers look at the damages brought on by Harvey above.

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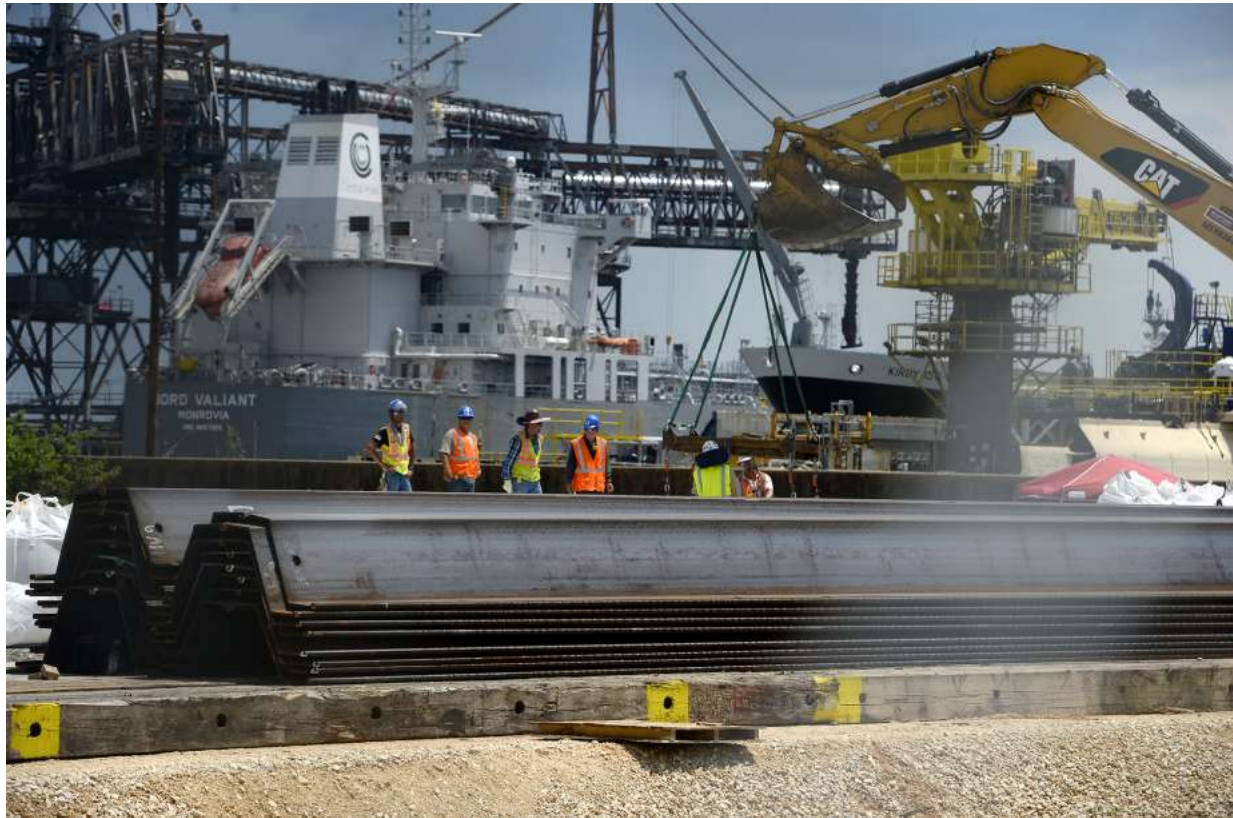
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Chron <http://www.chron.com/business/energy/article/Valero-s-Port-Arthur-fire-released-an-estimated-1-12215325.php>

Valero's Port Arthur fire released an estimated 1 million pounds of emissions

Jordan Blum, Houston Chronicle Published 3:15 pm, Wednesday, September 20, 2017

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Workers build a wall of sandbags along the damaged levee near the Valero Port Arthur refinery in preparation for Hurricane Harvey on Thursday. Photo taken Thursday 8/24/17 Ryan Pelham/The Enterprise

Valero Energy's refinery fire on Tuesday released nearly 1 million pounds of emissions into the air, mostly from the columns of smoke caused by the burning oil, the San Antonio company estimated.

The fire, which lasted about three hours in the early afternoon, originated from an oil storage tank at the refining complex, but the cause remains under investigation. The stated pollutants released during the fire are self-reported estimates from Valero.

The fire emitted about 640,000 pounds of particulate matter - the smoke, soot, dirt and dust that, once inhaled, can affect the heart and lungs and cause serious health effects. The accident also released more than 135,000 pounds of carbon monoxide and nearly 120,000 pounds of sulfur dioxide, among other volatile compounds, according to the filing submitted to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

The data makes it clear the fire was a huge emissions event, even though the data is preliminary and self reported, said Luke Metzger, director of Environment Texas in Austin.

"Valero released enormous amounts of particulate matter, which is very dangerous to breathe. This is unacceptable and we'll be reviewing the final report and cause of the upset," Metzger said.

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There was a temporary shelter in place request for neighboring communities on Tuesday.

Valero must file an updated report within two weeks of the incident.

For comparison's sake, refineries, petrochemical plants and other industrial operations spewed some 2.6 million pounds of pollutants into the air during Harvey-related shutdowns and accidents in the Houston area, according to self-reported emissions to TCEQ. That's equal to about half of the more than 5 million pounds of emissions reported for all of last year for emergency shutdowns, maintenance and accidents in the Houston region, which does not include Port Arthur.

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RELATED: Fire breaks out at Valero's Port Arthur refinery

Valero's Port Arthur refinery was shuttered during Hurricane Harvey, but had restarted in recent days and was operating at close to 50 percent capacity.

There were no reported injuries and all of the employees were accounted for, Valero said.

Elsewhere, Valero had issues with its Houston refinery during and after Harvey. A collapsed roof at a storage tank at the East Houston refinery caused a release of oil and benzene, which is a cancer-causing compound of crude that can circulate in the air as vapor.

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What lurks in the sludge that Harvey left behind?

By Allyn West | September 20, 2017 | Updated: September 21, 2017 8:45am

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Photo: Asakura Robinson

IMAGE 1 OF 5

Jesus Bautista Moroles's Houston Police Officer Memorial on Buffalo Bayou is completely covered by sediment in this aerial photo from Friday, September 15, 2017.

All over the Houston area, as Harvey's floodwaters receded, they left behind sludge — a mix of grit and debris picked up from streets and sewers and eroded bayou banks.

Though that sediment sometimes appears to be as clean as sand — the **large deposits in Buffalo Bayou Park** are being described as "beaches" or "dunes" — it's definitely dirty, say experts.

How dirty, though — and whether the sediment is contaminated and poses environmental and health hazards — is still being determined.

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality is testing the sediment only near known hazardous sites or industrial facilities, not in homes or in parks, said Andrew Keese, a media spokesperson.



"We need the data," said Lauren Stadler, a Rice University professor who received a \$200,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to study the chemical and microbial contaminants in Harvey's wake.

Buffalo Bayou Partnership will begin testing the sediment inside the park this week, said Anne Olson, the executive director. "Safety both for our staff and the public is a priority," she wrote in an email.



Photo: ERIC THAYER, NYT

ONE OF the challenges is that what's in the sediment will vary from place to place. Given

"the power and velocity" of Harvey's floodwaters, says Scott McCready, the SWA Group

Winifred Hamilton surveys floodwaters covering a neighborhood in Houston on Sept. 5, 2017.

landscape architect who led the design of the new Buffalo Bayou Park, the sludge could

include any particle that can be suspended in water — motor oil, gasoline, paint, household chemicals, even sewage. "It's a mixture of everything you can imagine in an urban neighborhood," he said.

A limited test of the sediment was recently conducted downstream of Buffalo Bayou Park at a flooded house in Clayton Homes by Dr. Winifred Hamilton, a professor and researcher at Baylor College of Medicine.

The family of seven who lived there had had to evacuate.

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Hamilton's team took samples from inside the kitchen, where the sediment was damp, and from the porch, where the sediment was dry.



**industrial plants
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She said that bacteria like *E. coli* and fecal coliform were found in the floodwaters, and heavy metals like arsenic, chromium, cadmium and lead in the sediment. Levels were even higher for sediment inside the house.

"Interior arsenic levels were two times higher, and cadmium was five times higher," she said.

"We don't want children playing in it," Hamilton said. "We don't want any children building sandcastles out of the sediment."

HAMILTON ALSO urged those who are mucking out houses or removing debris to take precautions.

"We're concerned what's going to happen with the sediment," she said.

As trucks remove debris now piled on curbs, she worries about the "blooms" of particulates released into the air. "Are [workers] blowing it around?" she asks. "Getting it on their hands? Ingesting lead and cadmium, which is associated with poor birth outcomes?"

Ingesting or handling the potentially contaminated sediment could also lead to other health problems. At least 10 percent of muckers during Katrina reported diarrhea and other forms of gastrointestinal distress, she said.

Also common was a sore throat and "Katrina cough," a dry cough associated with "particulates ... lodging in the upper respiratory system."

"People are doing heroic things," she said. "There are lots of people out there helping. But there are significant environmental hazards."



"There's stuff everywhere," said Robert Rayburn, the executive director of the Bayou Preservation Association. "It needs to be tested by the city and all governing agencies that oversee public health, and people need to be prudent."



Photo: Molly Glentzer

For now, though, as the muckling continues, Hamilton urged workers to be sure to wear adequate masks, heavy gloves and "full protective equipment."

She advised them to open windows and doors to encourage ventilation: "The air inside is going to be much more toxic than the air outside."

"Wash your clothes separately. Wash your face. Wash your hands."

Flu-like symptoms of fatigue and headaches will be common, she added. "But if you start running a fever, or any skin area starts swelling or is hot or turns to red, or if you have trouble breathing or

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start wheezing, see a doctor," she said.

"And you shouldn't wait."

"In most cases, it's going to be minor. But if your immune system is compromised, or if you're very young or very old, or if you're not drinking enough decent water, your risk is elevated."

HAMILTON'S ADVICE comes too late for Jessica Miller, 37, who volunteered to help clean a house through the "Mud Army" Facebook group. At a west Houston condo owned by an 80-year-old woman who'd evacuated, Miller arrived ready to muck, armed with a mask, latex and work gloves, and heavy boots.

A slimy sludge covered everything, she said, even inside the refrigerator. Miller couldn't believe the stench: "It was just – foul."

The next day, she woke up in misery.

"My sinuses were completely stopped up. Achy body, headaches," she said. "I felt like I had the flu. I did nothing for two days."

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Her symptoms lingered all week.

"There were probably 100 or more of these condos, and people were doing the same thing in each one of them," she said. "Should humans even be in this?"

Follow Allyn West on Twitter: [@allynwest](#).

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Allyn West

Editor, Gray Matters

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Kept waiting, Kashmere Gardens is helping itself after Harvey

Lara Purser, via OffCite | September 21, 2017

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Photo: Elizabeth Conley, Houston Chronicle

Kathy King, 67, in her home in Kashmere Gardens after Harvey. King has lived in the home since she was 5.

"The City Houston is open for business," Mayor Sylvester Turner announced eight days after Hurricane Harvey began its roughshod path through the city. Downtown's office buildings are humming, but a 10-minute drive northeast exists a parallel universe named Kashmere Gardens.

Kashmere Gardens is a historically African-American community with a growing Hispanic population and one of the poorest in Houston. The median household annual income in this community averages **\$22,000** with 43 percent of households having an income less than \$14,000. More than 55 percent of the population is **unemployed** or out of the workforce.

Kashmere Gardens lies just beside Hunting Bayou and was one of the first areas to flood during Hurricane Harvey.

It has been in a terrible waiting game ever since.

Residents watched as waters rushed into their one-story homes in the dark hours of August 26, with most waiting until daybreak to safely evacuate. Families waited for as many as eight hours. Some called 911 and waited. Others managed to wave down Houston Fire Department and garbage trucks. Many attempted to evacuate by foot. There were multiple accounts of flooding that reached residents' necks as they moved towards higher ground. Small children and the elderly were carried or pulled on improvised flotation. Parents held tight to the arms of older children who were told to paddle their feet hard.

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Keith Downey, incoming President of Kashmere Gardens Super Neighborhood 52, estimates that more than 60 percent of his constituents' homes flooded.

But this was no unprecedented "gee-whiz" event. Much of of Kashmere Gardens falls within Harris County Flood Control District's (HCFCD) fundamentally flawed "100-year floodplain." It is inexplicable to residents that so few rescue and recovery resources were positioned for stranded citizens in a known flood-prone area and how little government presence has been felt on their streets in the weeks since.

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Why health care should start with what we eat

THOUGH HARVEY'S waters have receded, the waiting in Kashmere Gardens continues. But waiting should not be confused with doing nothing. Cleanup has been backbreaking and slow. The FEMA process has been long and confusing. Provisioning basic necessities without transportation has been nearly impossible.

Urania Clark has waited beside her flooded home and car on Hoffman Street for two weeks now. Her job as an HISD school crossing guard has been delayed due to school closures, so

she's unsure when her first paycheck will bring money in for storm-related expenses.

In the meanwhile, she keeps a grim vigil for a FEMA agent to arrive. She has meticulously documented the soggy remnants of the life she shared with her husband and 8-year-old daughter: the recently purchased sofa, the flat-screen television, even the 23-year-old wedding gifts whose sentimental value cannot be monetized.

She was proud of her tidy home and hoped the inspector would assess personal property loss in situ rather than as a tangled pile of debris at the curb. But this waiting is over. The landlord arrived before FEMA and has placed a lock on the front door, citing storm damage as cause to break her family's lease.

"I can't believe it," Clark says, as she lets out a tired, exasperated sigh. "FEMA hasn't come, but the management company is trying to put us out. They say if they don't get our stuff out, they're gonna trash it. Is it even legal? The least they can do is give us time so everyone can see FEMA. I saw it on TV... in Kingwood, the army trucks were all lined up to help people. They were helping people: everyone, everywhere. I got none of that help, nowhere. They forget about the little people like us. But we work and we pay taxes. Just like the people in Kingwood. They forgot about us."



Photo: BRYAN THOMAS, NYT

Flood-damaged insulation, furniture and other rubbish is piled outside a home in Kashmere Gardens on Sept. 2, 2017.

Clark is, in many respects, correct. Houston is a high tax city for the poor. The **poorest 20 percent pay more** of their income in taxes than any other income group in the state and have the sixth-highest state and local tax bill in the nation (12.6 percent of income).

Despite the fact that Houston is home to 24 Fortune 500 companies and boasts a regional GDP approaching half a trillion dollars per year, Harris County's **\$100 million annual spend** on flood control is paltry compared to other flood-prone areas of the country. For example, adjusted for population, Southern Florida outspends Harris County 3 to 1. More generally, infrastructure projects tend to first serve affluent and politically connected communities and business interests, resulting in what some experts term **"ecological gentrification."**

Kashmere Gardens residents who feel forgotten by their government depend on each other. They piled into each other's trucks in search of higher ground during Harvey's lashing rain. They help each other carry waterlogged albums into the sun, hoping one or another photo can be saved. They pass FEMA paperwork between themselves, making twice-certain which form needs to be mailed and where. Pastors have opened their doors to feed many more than their congregation. Neighbors from surrounding areas of Houston are coming with bleach and masks and sandwiches.

Downey, who's also an architectural designer who worked as project manager for New York Parks and Recreation, is helping coordinate these efforts. Driving his car down Minden Street, he stops to check in on an elderly woman. "Let's talk to this resident and help get her heart changed."



Changing hearts and connecting them to one another is Downey's simple, motivating mantra: "No matter where you live or where you lay your head, it's about people caring about people. It's not about religion, it's not about creed, and it's not about color, it's about people helping people."



Photo: Raj Mankad

Keith Downey shares his assessments of flood damage with a volunteer coordinator.

Kashmere Heights is recovering through grass-roots organization. Downey has joined forces with Huey German-Wilson, the president of the Trinity Gardens Super Neighborhood, and Kenneth Williams, the president of the Kashmere High School Alumni Association, to become a triumvirate connecting volunteers and donations to needy citizens within the communities of Northeast Houston.

They use their deep connections to learn which congregation halls didn't flood and call the pastor to see if it can be quickly repurposed into a donation center. They know which street corner might be the best location to serve up 200 Operation BBQ meals in eight hours' time. They learn which addresses need cleaning supplies and which need Sheetrock demolition and match these needs with myriad larger citywide volunteer groups. They go door-to-door and use Facebook to connect with their social-media savvy constituents. Their phones erupt with calls and texts. Each one is answered.

Volunteer work crews and food distributions will inevitably thin as volunteers return to work and humanitarian aid migrates to communities affected by Hurricane Irma. When that happens, the longer-run challenges for Kashmere Gardens are formidable.

POSITIONED BETWEEN an industrial area and a rail corridor, Kashmere Gardens has also been isolated from the neighborhoods that once bordered it.

Decades of road infrastructure projects, many of which serve Houstonians' unquenchable thirst for cheaper land on the city's periphery, criss-cross their "drive-by" community.

Downey remembers his childhood, when Kashmere Gardens boasted quality shopping and services. But as the community became more geographically isolated, the number of local businesses dwindled.

Today, it is classified as a food desert where transportation is impeded by lack of sidewalks, pedestrian crossings and inadequate public transportation service.

Poor drainage due to illegal dumping, a dearth of quality affordable housing and lack of sustained attention by the City of Houston to these longer-term problems remain obstacles.

When asked where high-quality, affordable housing might be made available for residents permanently displaced by Harvey, Downey was eager to point out long-empty tracts of land in the immediate area, some of which were owned by Houston ISD.

Downey's community wish list is echoed and elaborated upon in the [2017 Kashmere Gardens Livable Centers Study](#) undertaken by the Houston-Galveston Area Council in conjunction with the Northside Management District. He served on its advisory committee. The report recognizes that, in an era booming with urban infill development, Kashmere Gardens' proximity to downtown Houston makes it prime for longer-term market appreciation.

The study, created with community input, sets forth a 10-year vision for Kashmere Gardens that is aligned with city goals and compatible with residents' identified needs. The report proposes attracting public-private funding to jumpstart the housing market through a combination of new mixed-use and single-family construction and construction assistance and related funding for

homes in disrepair, particularly those owned by senior citizens who lack the mobility and resources to do so otherwise.

Other recommendations include upgrades to local infrastructure, including community gateways, railroad crossings and increased public transportation options such as extending Community Connector Metro service that would provide user-generated "demand-response" service, as well as environmental mitigation of known soil and water contamination in the area.

Kashmere Gardens' long-term revitalization will also depend on creating flood resilient housing and taming Hunting Bayou waters during extreme weather events, like Hurricane Harvey.

Hunting Bayou exceeded its banks multiple times since 2000, despite **improvements in past years**, including widening and deepening of the flood channel and construction of the Homestead Basin, which was due to enter its third and final phased construction this August.



Photo: Raj Mankad

Homestead Basin in Kashmere Gardens after Harvey.

Harris County Flood Control District's (HCFCD) Hunting Project site work began in 2007 and is an estimated 10 to 15 percent finished with completion estimated in four to six years' time.

The Hunting Project includes plans to mitigate flood risk, in part, through the voluntary and involuntary relocation of 40 homes within Kashmere Gardens' 100-year floodplain. This process has been a yearslong effort with some, but certainly not all, residents amenable to relocation.

Anxiety and resistance are keenly felt by residents with deep community attachments. Kevin A. Lynn's [2017 study of Kashmere Gardens](#) highlights these relocation hurdles:

Monetary compensation may not be suitable to address certain community and social effects. The social impacts are likely to be especially significant for communities of color. Political outsiders who make plans for relocation often have inaccurate impressions of their needs and priorities, overlooking attachment to neighborhoods, and strong social ties.

As she cleaned out her 79-year-old mother's flooded Kashmere Gardens home, Vera Matthews distilled Lynn's research findings more bluntly: "We were raised right here until I got married. Someone has been right here, forever. [Relocation] is not always convenient for elderly people. She has her community that she is familiar with so why would she want to move all the way out to Spring or Cypress or somewhere else? Transportation is not there. You have to have a vehicle."

The resilience of the Kashmere Gardens community as it undertakes the hurricane recovery process stands in tension with the endemic economic vulnerabilities residents face while doing so. Amid uninsured losses, FEMA denials and lost wages due to the storm, the financial and emotional stress of rebuilding is enormous.



Photo: Keith Downey

Keith Downey, Kenneth Williams, and Huey German-Wilson.

To a great extent, political and policy decisions will help shape the longer-term pace and direction of revitalization. With sufficient political will and funding, Kashmere Gardens Livable Centers Study offers one promising blueprint for its post-Harvey future.

Lara Purser is a writer living in Houston. This article originally appeared on OffCite, a publication of the Rice Design Alliance, a community engagement program of Rice Architecture.